

Preferred Program Alternative

E-008264

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February 23, 2000

TO: CALFED Policy Group

FROM: Mike Madigan, Chair *M. M.*
Bay-Delta Advisory Council

SUBJECT: BDAC Assessment of Strengths/Weaknesses of Preferred Program Alternative
and Identification of Issues to be Addressed Into Implementation

Summary

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council has responsibility to "recommend the best solution alternative for implementation by the appropriate agencies, as part of the NEPA/CEQA environmental documentation process" (BDAC Charter). As part of fulfilling this responsibility, BDAC met on February 17, 2000 and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the Preferred Program Alternative.

Sunne McPeak, Eric Hasseltine and Alex Hildebrand summarized the assessment with the following proposed motion and proposed amendment to the motion, with the understanding that more discussion was needed before a recommendation could be forwarded to the CALFED Policy Group. A revised motion will be presented to BDAC for discussion and possible endorsement at the April 13, 2000 BDAC meeting.

Proposed motion:

To endorse the preferred alternative as written and recommend aggressive progress on:

- identifying guaranteed funding for ecosystem restoration,
- guaranteeing Delta outflows that support fish populations,
- optimizing water use efficiency and links to other program elements, such as storage,
- decisions regarding storage and conveyance facilities,

Proposed amendment to motion:

Add following bullets:

- optimizing through Delta conveyance,
- accurately identifying water supply increases from actions,
- balancing competing needs within and outside the Delta,

Alex Hildebrand suggested that the Record of Decision/Certification contain a preamble that commits to resolving the issues contained in the bullets.

Description

Provided below is the assessment of the Preferred Program Alternative made by BDAC members. While a few comments focused on the preferred alternative and the EIS/EIR

assessment, most focused on implementation, such as refinements to individual program plans and governance and finance issues. An underlying issue, as stated by Mike Madigan, is deciding where population growth in California should be focused: in existing population centers, such as the coast, or in the Central Valley.

Preferred Program Alternative Assessment

Statements of Support

1. Continue progress on finalizing the preferred alternative, including making necessary adjustments. Do not stop the Phase 11 decision-making process. (G. Andreuccetti)
2. Support for water transfers. (S. McPeak)

Preferred Program Alternative Weaknesses

3. The preferred alternative does not balance the competing water quality needs of in-Delta interests and those who use water exported from the Delta, e.g. reducing salinity in export water will increase salinity in the Delta. (A. Hildebrand)
4. The preferred alternative offers no commitment to or assurances for a reliable water supply or use of state and federal water storage and conveyance facilities on a regular basis, in exchange for increased investments in water use efficiency. (M. Steams)
5. Linking decisions to construct new storage with demonstrated progress in meeting water use efficiency targets is inappropriate since the primary purpose of storage is to improve water quality and provide water for environmental purposes. Increasing water yield or supply is a secondary purpose. (B. Buck)
6. The language on the dual conveyance concept is too vague. (S. Pyle, S. McPeak)
7. The preferred alternative needs to provide a strategy to increase water supply. (T. Belza)
8. The preferred alternative needs to balance environmental needs, equity and economic needs. (S. McPeak)
9. The preferred alternative needs to provide a guaranteed outflow of water to the Bay that supports fish populations during dry and possibly normal water years. (S. McPeak)

Issues to be Addressed Into Implementation

Comments on Program Elements

10. Need more focused studies on storage. (S. Pyle)
11. Strongly consider use of groundwater storage and conjunctive use to capture high water flows, and use the water during other times of the year when needed. (F. Spivy-Weber)
12. Water yield from storage has not yet been addressed. (A. Hildebrand)
13. Ground water overdraft needs to be stopped. (A. Hildebrand)
14. Accelerate progress on meeting water use efficiency, ecosystem restoration, watershed management and water supply reliability targets so that decisions on constructing storage facilities can be made sooner than planned. (S. McPeak)

15. Provide a dedicated, consistent funding source for environmental restoration. (R. Borgonovo/EWC)
16. Provide a dedicated source of water for environmental purposes that is in addition to requirements in the CVPIA, Bay-Delta Accord, Trinity Decision and ESA biological opinions. (R. Borgonovo/EWC)
17. Create a new ecosystem restoration entity. (R. Borgonovo/EWC)
18. Work with local interests to carefully assess options, such as changes in crops, to increase agricultural water use efficiency. (B. Raab, T. Belza)
19. Consider water desalinization as an option for coastal communities (M. Madigan, H. Dunning)
20. The Program needs a strong link between water use efficiency and storage actions. (J. Redmond)

Decision-Making/Governance

21. Specify and integrate all state and federal agreements and permits needed to implement the CALFED plan. (B. Southwick)
22. Avoid a solution for one problem that will undermine solutions for other problems (R. Borgonovo/EWC)
23. Use management strategies that avoid reconciling problems at the expense of specific interest groups. (B. Southwick)
24. Support phased decision-making. (F. Spivy-Weber, P. Parravano)
25. Work on problems on a regional scale. (F. Spivy-Weber)
26. Effective assurances are needed, especially those that will ensure implementation as planned and to keep the public and stakeholders involved. (R. Borgonovo, J. Redmond)

Finance

27. Identify and clarify how the preferred alternative actions will be financed. (R. Izmirian, S. McPeak)
28. Require that beneficiaries of CALFED actions pay the cost of those actions. (R. Borgonovo/EWC)

EIS/EIR Impact Assessment

29. Address the impacts of CALFED actions which propose taking agricultural land out of production on local communities and the different segments of local economies. (H. Frick, M. Guzman)
30. Address positive and negative effects of CALFED actions on marine and land based food production. (P. Parravano)